

From: Gary A. Bartholomew
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/2/02 2:26pm
Subject: microsoft problem

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This article from Mr. Mossberg says everything.

Consumers lose in proposed Justice

Department settlement with Microsoft
Posted on December 31, 2001

By WALTER S. MOSSBERG

It has been a terrific year for Microsoft, but average consumers of its products haven't fared so well.

Microsoft made major progress in its goal of using its Windows operating system to push its other products and services at the expense of its competitors. Consumers are the losers.

software giant was under the breakup, having been found judge of violating antitrust

threw out the breakup order lower-court judge, although his findings. The seven unanimously that Microsoft was the antitrust laws by into its Windows to freeze out other

the court said Microsoft Windows in a way that ability of users to companies' products it was OK to add features weren't added mainly to

When 2001 started, the threat of a court-ordered guilty by a federal district laws in multiple ways.

In June, an appeals court and harshly criticized the it upheld the legal core of appeals judges ruled a monopoly that had violated integrating its Web browser operating system in an effort browsers.

Expressed in plain English, shouldn't be allowed to design limits consumer choice - the discover and easily use other and services. The court said to Windows, as long as they maintain Microsoft's monopoly.

company went on to launch Windows XP - that into the operating crucial to extending next battleground: it added these features

allows users to easily authenticate their to order prints of photos features work only with Internet services, or that pay Microsoft for Competing services, better-established or more popular integrated into Windows XP in are less likely to turn

more breathtaking online competition. It Windows XP a feature whereby automatically add across the Web, without the These Microsoft-imposed Tags, would have led those of its partners. feature only after it was sparked a massive right to try again.

behavior, you'd expect the adversely. Instead, it has antitrust case in a way that conduct unfettered.

Despite this decision, the a new version of Windows - continued to integrate tightly system new features that are Microsoft's monopoly onto the Internet-based services. And in a way that hinders consumer choice. For instance, Windows XP perform instant messaging, to identities across the Web and on their hard disks. But these Microsoft's own proprietary services owned by companies inclusion in Windows XP. including those than Microsoft's, aren't the same smooth way, so users to them.

Microsoft attempted an even attack on consumer choice and tried to integrate into the built-in Web browser would links to millions of sites permission of the owners. links, called browser Smart users to Microsoft's sites and The company dropped the discussed in this column and outcry. But it reserved the

Given this unrepentant Justice Department to react proposed to settle the would leave this sort of

October, now pending
judge, does bar some
But much of it pertains
with the hapless makers of
position to defy Microsoft. It
except indirectly; it's
Microsoft's competitors or
the past, not the future
It doesn't touch the
Windows XP to extend its

building new features or
Windows? Nothing, per se. I
who assert that
feature that other
separately. A more useful
The problem is the

Windows XP contains a
instant messaging. But that
about which service a
use the America Online
the built-in Windows
do so, just as I can use
e-mail program with
Instead, Microsoft has wired

it common in a free
one of their products to
AOL use its online
made by its Warner
Wall Street Journal run
publications and Web

The settlement reached in
before yet another federal
offensive Microsoft behavior.
to the company's relations
PCs, which aren't in any
isn't about consumer choice,
more about placating
partners. And it's all about
battle in Internet services.
company's ability to use
monopoly to these new areas.
What's wrong with Microsoft
gateways to services into
have never agreed with critics
Windows shouldn't contain any
companies want to sell
Windows is good for consumers.
way these features are designed.
It's great, for example, that
built-in interface for doing
interface should be neutral
consumer wants. If I prefer to
instant-messaging service with
interface, I should be able to
the built-in browser and
non-Microsoft services.
the interface to its own service.
So what, some might ask? Isn't
market for companies to use
cross-promote another? Doesn't
service to boost the movies
Brothers studios? Doesn't The
ads and plugs for its sister

other companies aren't
and when you're a
different rules, as the

Justice Department
bad for consumers. It isn't
consumer choice. It
nettlesome case out of

shouldn't try to destroy or
require the software
choice in its dominant
Unfortunately, in 2001, that's not

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Gary A. Bartholomew
Bartholomew Photography Inc.
433 E. Golf Road.
DesPlaines IL. 60016
Voice 847 635 0799
Fax 847 824 8473

sites?

The difference is that these
court-certified monopolies,
monopoly, you have to follow
appeals court said.

So, in my view, the proposed
settlement with Microsoft is
about preserving or enhancing
seems to be about getting the
the government's hair.

Our government and courts
run Microsoft. But they should
monopoly to expand consumer
operating system.
what happened.